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ABSTRACT

According to the author of this report, enthusiasm for inservice programs has been lacking, partly due to disagreement over program control and partly due to a perceived lack of relevance in the programs. This overview of a number of research and development projects suggests that the programs' relevance is the more important of these factors and that even mandatory programs may eventually be accepted by teachers when the classroom outcomes of the new approaches are sufficiently effective. On the other hand, the participation of inservice trainees in defining the needs and goals to be addressed by inservice programs is also important, and a number of the projects discussed in this report emphasize collegial approaches to program selection as well as to the implementation of new practices. Among the concepts described are peer coaching by teachers, the use of teacher cadres, and collaboration between administrators and teachers. One of the programs noted, the Teacher Center Project, differs from the other projects in that its programs are teacher-initiated and tend to be oriented toward individual training needs rather than institutional goals. The success of this project underscores the necessity of considering individual development needs when planning inservice education and staff development programs. (Author/PGD)

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Collegiality May Be the Password to Effective Inservice Programs

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Researchers have referred to it as "education's neglected stepchild," teachers have labeled it a waste of time, and many administrators give it lip service but are not sure what to do with it. Still, inservice education does not go away, and for good reason. Inservice programs potentially offer effective means for both professional growth and school improvement.

Two problems have contributed to the lack of enthusiasm for inservice. The first concerns governance—the question of who participates in the planning and implementation of the program and who makes the final decisions. The second lies in the inability of most school districts to make inservice programs an integral part of the teaching (or administering) experience.

One outcome, according to Robert Bush, emeritus professor of education at Stanford University, is that teachers are bargaining for fewer days of staff development. In a presentation to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, Bush urged teachers to bargain instead for "more inservice education and staff development of the kind they want and need and that research shows to be effective." It is hoped that the review of research presented here will encourage teachers and administrators to follow Bush's advice.

The Terms and Issues

In the interests of clarity, this discussion must begin with a definition of terms. Those used to describe inservice programs are laden with connotations of control and participation: "teacher inservice" and "staff development" suggest administrator-initiated programs that may fulfill managerial needs; "professional development" can imply teacher-initiated programs that serve individual needs. Thus the National Education Association's national headquarters has a section called Instruction and Professional Development, while most school districts label their inservice programs as staff development. In some districts, however, staff development refers to training for all staff members except teachers, who are served by teacher inservice programs.

For convenience's sake, this article will use *inservice education* to refer to those programs that concentrate on teaching skills and *staff development*, stripped of its undertones of administrative or "top-down" implementation, to reflect inservice programs for teachers or administrators that serve both school-oriented and individually expressed needs for training. The purpose of this article is not to advocate one type of governance structure over another but to relate the issue of control to

different perspectives of inservice education and staff development, to draw inferences from current research projects, and to indicate trends growing out of the present emphasis on school effectiveness.

A 1980 research analysis brief on staff development prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management concludes that research points to "a need for more participation in choosing and running staff development programs."

The primary concern of teachers is that staff development programs be relevant and feasible.

This is also the conclusion of much of the professional literature. Joe Vaughn, team leader for research on the improvement of teaching at the National Institute of Education, offers a different perspective on the controversy over who should control staff development. According to Vaughn,

> There may have been too much energy devoted to who's doing what rather than to what's being done. Surveys have indicated that teachers are more interested in the content and process of programs rather than in who makes the decisions about those programs. They want a role, an active voice, but they don't necessarily feel they alone should have decision-making power. Their primary concern is that staff development programs be relevant and feasible.

The theme of relevancy is echoed by others. Roberta Hickman, a member of the Center for Educational Policy and Management's (CEPM) National Advisory Panel and of the staff of the San Antonio (Texas) Teachers' Council, remarked that teachers consistently indicate a distaste for staff development because it generally does not meet their immediate needs. Mary Louise Holly, Kent State University, interviewed 102 teachers in grades K through 12 and concluded,

> The single most important factor determining the value teachers placed on an inservice education activity was its *personal relevance.* This factor is clearly related to some of the aspects of inservice education that teachers said could be improved, including teacher input into program planning, the amount of choice among programs, the amount of teacher-to-teacher sharing, and the amount of participation in program activities.

Meredith Gall, a professor of teacher education associated with CEPM, describes teachers as having a love-hate relationship with staff development programs. They are dissatisfied with the content and delivery of many existing programs, but recognize the potential of inservice to answer pressing needs in education.

Inservice and Basic Skills

Gall and Fay Haisley, associate dean for teacher education at the University of Oregon and also associated with CEPM, are addressing the problem of relevancy. Their project will develop a research-based model linking particular practices in inservice education to teacher productivity in basic skills instruction. Their study focuses on the amount and quality of inservice training received by individual teachers. In their review of the literature, the researchers found a paucity of studies describing inservice programs as they presently exist. Consequently, the first step in their project is to interview teachers and administrators in three diverse school districts in Oregon to determine what percentage of inservice programs deal with the basic skills.

Gall and Haisley's project is unique in its attempt to connect inservice and achievement. They state, "One manifestation of loose coupling in schools is that means, such as inservice activities, are often disconnected from ends, such as improvement of student performance in the basic skills." A further complication, especially at the elementary level, is the fact that teachers are generally more concerned about students' emotional needs than academic needs. Teachers often measure success in terms of "kids feeling good about themselves."

Thus far, Gall and Haisley's research has yielded little evidence that inservice programs oriented to individuals produce different results among teachers and students than school-oriented programs. For school-wide improvement efforts, however, they suggest that mandatory participation is more effective and that individual preferences and needs may necessarily become secondary to school goals. This is not to suggest that individually initiated inservice education is not equally important—both approaches are vital to a comprehensive approach to inservice.

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In-class Coaching

While Gall and Haisley are developing a model for inservice that embodies effective practices in teaching the basic skills, Beverly Showers, also affiliated with CEPM, is testing a promising strategy—coaching—that helps teachers transfer complex approaches to teaching from the training environment to the classroom. Many promising teaching strategies have not survived in actual practice because teachers either fail to fully understand and implement the innovation or because, with time, they gradually relapse into old routines. Coaching is a collegial approach that occurs when the "trainee" attempts to implement the new teaching strategy in the classroom. Showers defines coaches as peers, supervisors, principals, college instructors, or others competent in the approach.

In coaching, an intensive cycle of observation and feedback between trainee and coach leads to an emphasis on the appropriateness of specific strategies to certain goals. The two-person team looks for appropriate uses of the skills being transferred, evaluates the effectiveness of observed lessons, and plans for future trial. After transfer has occurred, it is likely that the teacher will continue to use the newly learned technique.

Showers's investigation is being carried out in three phases. In the first phase, twenty teachers from junior high schools in the Eugene-Bethel-Springfield (Oregon) area received training in three models of teaching. The second phase provided coaching to half of the teacher sample. The project is currently in its third phase in which all teachers will plan instructional units using identical materials. All students are being tested following the completion of the planned unit. Analysis of the student test results as well as data from other instruments measuring teacher conceptual level and behavior should yield information about the process of skill transfer, the contribution of coaching to such transfer, and the effect of transfer on student learning and attitudes towards instruction.

Showers's research suggests that it may be necessary for a teacher to learn a skill thoroughly before deciding whether or not it is effective in the classroom. She cites a study of schools in Israel where teachers had little choice in adopting innovations. They were required to participate in a massive inservice program whether they were enthusiastic or not. The project resulted in successful implementation of the new teaching method. Trainers working with DISTAR and other direct instruction models have encountered substantial resistance from teachers before training, but much of the resistance transforms into acceptance once the model is implemented. Russell Gersten and Douglas Carnine in their study of Follow Through programs reported, "A consistent finding in the interviews was that as teachers observed dramatic improvements in student performance, their attitudes toward the innovation gradually changed. Many teachers initially disliked the highly structured program, finding it alien to their humanistic beliefs. Yet, as the year progressed and they saw the immense gains the students made in reading and language, they

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began to rethink their educational philosophy."

These studies would indicate, once more, that in certain circumstances mandatory participation has resulted in increased productivity. For research-validated practices that need to be implemented on a school-wide basis, everyone's cooperation is a prerequisite for success. To return to Joe Vaughn's comments, the focus of these efforts should not be a polarizing argument over who makes decisions, but a collegial effort to identify and implement relevant content for inservice programs.

The reliance on peers in Showers's study is already a feature

of CEPM's Research Based Training for School Administrators (RBTSA) project, directed by Nancy J. Pitner. Using Project Leadership as a model, RBTSA has generated training packets for administrators that combine research findings with practical suggestions for improving skills such as time, stress, conflict, and resource management. Trained administrators serve as workshop leaders, and participants attend both statewide meetings, which are structured, and regional meetings, which are shaped by the needs and desires of those in attendance. The project shares many common characteristics with successful teacher inservice projects—goals are clearly defined, presentations combine theory and practice in skills development, and group leaders remain in contact with participants in between training sessions to see that they continue to practice their newly acquired skills.

In certain circumstances mandatory participation has resulted in increased productivity.

The increase in the numbers of administrators who participate in inservice programs may result in a more acute sensitivity to the needs of teachers in their staff development programs. In fact, in his interviews with teachers, Gall has found great enthusiasm for the idea that principals should participate with teachers in staff development programs. The Alaska Effective School Task Force Study has resulted in a plan for leadership team training (see the Winter 1982 issue of *R&D Perspectives*) that will involve the collaboration of principals, teachers, and representatives from district offices. Similarly, the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory offers workshops for entire school districts or groups of schools within districts to help teachers and administrators increase academic learning time. Each participating school sends a team including the principal, two or three teachers, and a central office staff member.

The Cadre Idea

The idea of approaching school problems through a staff development effort that includes teachers and administrators working together is not new. Center researchers Richard Schmuck and Philip Runkel have been working as a team in organizational development (OD) for fifteen years. OD, though not synonymous with staff development, can include activities that fall under the same rubric. Briefly, OD is a system of group techniques that helps staff members communicate better in solving problems that arise in schools, which are often related to instruction. OD's success depends on trained cadres of teachers, administrators, and district office personnel who can step in and help a school work out its problems. Cadre members function as both internal and external consultants: they are drawn from the same district as the school they are called upon to help, but generally those selected to serve a particular school are not members of that school's staff.

The Eugene (Oregon) cadre was established ten years ago and today numbers 25. Recently, a three-person team composed of a senior high school principal, a junior high school counselor, and a fourth grade teacher helped train staff in a new middle school on the techniques of team teaching.

Schmuck explains that cadres work with intact school groups, including "teaching teams, academic departments, parent task forces, or entire school staffs . . . so that the staff itself is educated as a unit, with colleagues helping one another to make changes they want in the school's interpersonal relations, norms, structures, and procedures." He notes that the cadre idea often defuses potentially divisive situations and focuses the attention of an entire school or department on goals that supersede political or professional factions.

The Role of Teacher Centers

Most of the work discussed so far concerns group participation in staff development or inservice programs. A significant and innovative complement to these approaches is the national Teacher Center Project initiated in 1978. The project established 60 centers nationwide (the number has grown to over 100 at present) and mandated that these centers be controlled by policy boards whose membership must include a majority of teachers. Other members of the board were to comprise school administrators, school board members, and university professors. Controversy abounded; many administrators opposed the freedom given to the boards to hire and fire staff, plan programs, and disburse funds as they saw fit.

Three years later the controversy has abated and the centers have gained a wide measure of acceptance. They offer services tailored to both groups and individuals, but, according to Jack Turner, former director of the BEST Center

(serving the Bethel, Eugene, and Springfield school districts in Oregon), the selling point for the centers has been their capacity to respond to individual needs. In fact, Sally Mertens and Sam Yarger, Syracuse University, found in their comprehensive study in 1981 of 37 teacher centers that more teachers took advantage of individualized services and resources offered by the centers than enrolled in group activities.

Mertens and Yarger found that the content of teacher center programs was consistent with what other groups, such as administrators, parents, and legislators, feel is important. Seventy-five percent of the programs dealt with improving instruction, and within this category, the most prevalent offerings concerned specific teaching methods and curriculum, with an emphasis on basic skills. The researchers also found that center activities provide "more experiential and hands-on involvement than one typically finds in inservice programs" and reflect teachers' desires to enhance "their repertoire of basic skills and techniques that have distinct implications for classroom practice." From this study and Gall and Haisley's emerging finding that few district-operated inservice programs touch directly upon basic skills instruction, it would appear that teachers have turned to teacher centers for specific assistance that has not been offered by other inservice activities.

Both individual and school needs must be balanced and served in an inclusive vision of staff development.

The governance of teacher centers, initially the source of substantial disagreement, has proved to be more palatable than critics had thought. According to Mertens and Yarger,

> The fear of relinquishing some aspects of control is probably much worse than the actual effect. . . .The governance issue simply is not a major stumbling block, and may even be a red herring in the discussions about and planning for different kinds of inservice programs. . . . It appears, in summary, that if we have learned anything at all about the governance of inservice education programs, we've learned that it is an overstated issue, one that creates more problems in adversarial rhetoric than it does in program development.

In his three-year directorship of the BEST Center, however, Turner found that governance was still a consideration. Despite national recognition as a successful teacher center, BEST will close sometime next fall because the local districts did not agree to pay a share of the costs when federal categorical funding is terminated. Turner, who currently works for the Eugene Public Schools, has as one of his responsibilities the development of a district Training Center, which will serve teachers, administrators, and classified staff. While trying to incorporate many elements of BEST into the new center, Turner states that it will be materially different. Where BEST specialized in certain areas, such as reading, middle schools, the gifted, and microcomputers, the new center will need to be more comprehensive—and it will be under the district's supervision. Turner attributes

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a large share of the tug-of-war over governance to collective bargaining. "Bargaining hurts," he remarks, "because it has resulted in greater polarization between teachers and administrators. Teachers have gained higher salaries, perhaps, but they have made a sad tradeoff: money for mutual respect and collegiality."

Shared Work, Shared Decisions

Collegiality is still evident in the staff development programs of some schools. Judith Warren Little, a researcher with the Center for Action Research in Boulder (Colorado), conducted a study of staff development in a school district in a major metropolitan area and found that the more successful schools were characterized by expectations for shared work, in which "teachers and administrators plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together . . . (in which) teachers and administrators *teach each other* the practice of teaching." Little's study also indicated the importance of reciprocity in staff interactions, including those between persons of different status (principal and teacher) or function (consultant and teacher). Little warns, however, that "the offer of shared work turns out to be something of a fruitless exercise in the absence of a shared idea; teachers and administrators involve themselves in staff development most willingly and consistently when there is something of demonstrable relevance to work *on*."

A model of collaborative staff development that reaches out beyond the school district was tested in 1977 by William J. Tikunoff, Beatrice A. Ward, and Gary A. Griffin. Called the Interactive Research and Development on Teaching (IR&DT) Study, the project sought to determine whether teachers, teacher educators, and researchers could work together in a school-based team to focus on problems of teaching. The results of the study suggest that IR&DT can be a powerful vehicle for staff development. Benefits to participants using the approach were identified as altered perceptions of the options and possibilities for teaching and learning, increased collegiality, greater knowledge of and skill in using research, and shifts in pedagogy and research orientations.

In a more recent paper that summarizes the results of the IR&DT study and others, Griffin lists the features of staff development that have been associated with positive outcomes. Among them he includes

- voluntary participation
- teacher-administrator teaming and other professional collegial relationships
- the use of teachers as trainers
- concrete, teacher-specific plans
- participative governance
- in-class assistance (coaching)
- the availability of technical assistance

Present research on staff development and inservice programs emphasizes collegiality—whether it is represented by teachers coaching each other in methods or by teachers, administrators, and researchers working together to effect school improvement. Both individual and school needs must be balanced and served in an inclusive vision of staff development. Undoubtedly no one approach "does it all." What is promising is the availability of research-validated approaches that can work. The first step for schools to take in selecting an approach or approaches is to define very specifically their most important needs and then to translate those needs into clearly defined goals for school improvement. And if schools are to act upon the findings of research, these needs and goals should be defined collaboratively by teachers and administrators.

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